

SHARROW PILOT PROJECT

Clifton Ave. (*McMillan St. to Ludlow Ave.*)

Ludlow Ave. (*Bowdle Pl. to Clifton Hills*)

Madison Rd. (*Beechcrest Ln. to Torrence Pkwy.*)



Sharrows are pavement markings installed within travel lanes, reminding motorists that they should expect to see and share the road with cyclists. In addition, sharrows help cyclists position themselves within the lane so as to avoid being hit by a suddenly opened car door. Although it is the motorist's responsibility to check before opening their door, riding too close to parked cars is still a common mistake that can lead to serious injury.

In May 2009 the Department of Transportation & Engineering began a pilot project to evaluate the effectiveness of sharrows on Clifton Ave., Ludlow Ave., and Madison Rd. The markings, which include a bicycle symbol with arrows at the top, were placed every few hundred feet on the pavement. There were no other striping or parking changes.

The Department of Transportation & Engineering recognizes the importance of improving bicycle safety while maintaining on-street parking in certain areas. Sharrows offer a promising way of accomplishing this at a relatively low cost. These markings have been successfully used in other cities across the country, and will be evaluated here in Cincinnati over the next twelve months.

For more information: email sharrows@cincinnati-oh.gov or visit our website at www.cincinnati-oh.gov/sharrows

What do sharrows mean for bicyclists and drivers?

Bicyclists:

Use the sharrow to guide where you ride within the lane—generally through the center of the sharrow when safe to do so.

Remember not to ride too close to parked cars—watch for opening doors

Be aware of your surroundings and follow the rules of the road

Drivers:

Expect to see bicyclists on the street

Remember to give bicyclists space when passing

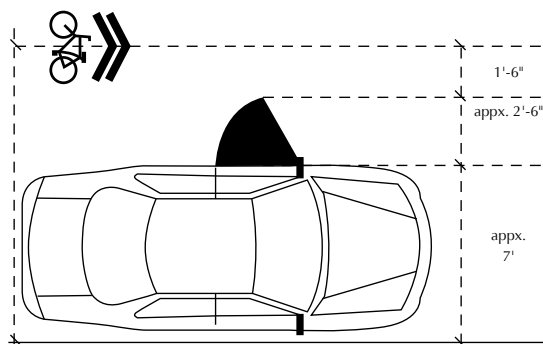
Be aware of your surroundings and follow the rules of the road

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Shared Lane Markings (aka “SHARROWS”)

Q. I've seen new pavement markings on streets in Cincinnati. The marking is a bicycle with two arrows above it. What does it mean?

A. What you're seeing is a shared lane pavement marking, also known as a “sharrow”, now in use in 73 US communities. Right now we're studying them as part of a Federal Highway Administration evaluation process.



Q. So, if I don't see sharrows, then it's not a shared lane and bicyclists aren't supposed to be there?

A. No. Bicyclists can ride on any street in Cincinnati except for Interstates and other highways with signs specifically prohibiting bicyclists.

Q. Why are these markings on the street, what is their purpose?

A. The purpose of the markings is to create improved conditions for bicycling, by clarifying where cyclists are expected to ride and to remind motorists to expect cyclists on the road. In the absence of bicycle lanes, motorists often pass too closely to cyclists, and cyclists feel compelled to ride closer to parked cars. If somebody were to open a car door as a cyclist passed the cyclist could get “doored,” and possibly get injured.

Q. Why not just stripe bike lanes?

A. Our preference on these streets would be striped bike lanes or wide curb lanes. We're using the sharrows instead because there isn't currently enough room on the street for bike lanes or wide curb lanes in these areas. This is typically because of a combination of a high demand for on-street parking, and the inability to either eliminate a travel lane, or narrow the existing travel lanes. It is often also prohibitively expensive to widen the roadway.

Q. As a cyclist, what should I do in the presence of these markings?

A. The markings are placed where cyclists should be riding. Cyclists should ride through the center of the sharrow.

Q. But on some streets, cyclists riding over this marking will take the entire lane. Aren't they supposed to move to the right?

A. Not always. Cyclists are required to ride as far to the right as practicable, according to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 4511.55, like all slower moving vehicles. They are permitted to avoid surface hazards, to prepare for a left turn, to move out of a right-turn-only lane or to pass slower moving bicycles. These markings will be used in situations where the lane is too narrow for a bicycle and an overtaking motor vehicle to travel safely side by side. This means they will take the entire lane to avoid car doors. Slower moving vehicles are not required to compromise their safety in order to allow a faster vehicle to pass. (ORC Section 4511.25(B)(2)).

Q. As a motorist, what should I do in the presence of the sharrows?

A. Slow down and drive carefully. Because the travel lane is too narrow for safe side-by-side travel by motorists and cyclists, motorists should slow down and either wait for the cyclist to turn off the roadway, or wait until s/he can move into an adjacent travel lane.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish with the sharrows?

A. We want to create safer conditions for bicyclists on busy streets where we should have bicycle lanes or wide curb lanes but currently cannot. We hope to do this by moving cyclists a little further away from parked cars than they would normally ride in the absence of sharrows, and creating a little more separation between passing motorists and cyclists than would normally exist.

Q. Do the sharrows work?

A. A 2003 study in San Francisco showed that in the presence of the markings, cyclists moved further away from parked cars, and passing motorists moved further away from cyclists than in the absence of them. The study we are doing should be completed in 2010.